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October 18, 1901

## LA CEIBA, HONDURAS, October 6, 1901.

SIR: I have to make the following report of the conditions and transactions at this port during the week ended October 5, 1901:

Present officially estimated population, about 3,000. Number of cases and deaths from yellow fever during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from smallpox during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from typhus fever during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from cholera during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from plague during the week, none. Prevailing disease, malarial fever. General sanitary condition of this port and the surrounding country during the week, good.

Bill of health was issued to the following vessel: October 3, steamship *Usk*; crew, 20; passengers from this port, none; passengers in transit, none; pieces of baggage disinfected, none.

Respectfully,

R. H. PETERS,

*Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,

*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

*Report from Puerto Cortez—Fruit port.*

## PUERTO CORTEZ, HONDURAS, October 1, 1901.

SIR: I have to make the following report of the conditions and transactions at this port during the week ended October 1, 1901:

Population according to census of 1896, 1,856; present officially estimated population, 2,000. Number of cases and deaths from yellow fever during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from smallpox during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from typhus fever during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from cholera during the week, none; number of cases and deaths from plague during the week, none; number of deaths from other causes during the week, none; prevailing diseases, malarial fever and measles. General sanitary condition of this port and the surrounding country during the week, very good.

Bills of health were issued to the following vessels: September 25, steamship *S. Oteri*; crew, 35; passengers from this port, 13; passengers in transit, 4; pieces of baggage disinfected, 16. September 29, steamship *España*; crew, 14; passengers from this port, none; passengers in transit, none; pieces of baggage disinfected, none.

Respectfully,

SAMUEL HARRIS BACKUS,

*Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,

*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

## ICELAND.

*Leprosy in Iceland and Denmark.*

## BERGEN, NORWAY, September 2, 1901.

Some time ago a Danish physician, Dr. Gudmunder Bjornson, gave a report upon the work of the Laugarnæs Hospital on Iceland, which was very complimentary to the Odd Fellow Order in Denmark.

This hospital was established by the Danish Odd Fellow Order, and opened on October 1, 1898.

At the end of the year 1899, 81 patients had been received. Of these 81 patients 18 are dead, and only 2 have been discharged as fully recovered, relapses being very usual in leprosy cases.

The death rate has consequently been fearfully high, but it must also be taken into consideration that the above-mentioned period comprises the first years of work of this hospital, and that the most sick of the Iceland population were first admitted.

Sixty-two of these patients were inmates of the poorhouse and had been sent by the parish. The majority had the disease in its last stage, and were awful to behold, a consequence of neglect in the homes. It seemed as if the greater part of them had nothing else to expect but death and burial.

But the excellent hygienic condition in the hospital saved many, at least for some time. Any perfect cure for this malady is still unknown.

Dr. Armaruer Hansen, of Bergen, Norway, has certainly found the leprosy bacillus, but its antagonist is as yet not discovered.

Still the Laugarnæs Hospital, on Iceland, has its great mission, that of limiting the spread of the disease, and rendering existence as tolerable as possible to the poor wretches who have come there to spend the rest of their lives. Their ulcers are kept clean and attended to, their general comfort is well cared for, while the hospital all the time is working, experimenting, and looking out that it constantly remains abreast with the progress of science.

Only through the limiting—internment—the hospital does a great deal of good. It is presumed, that at the end of the year 1896, there were in all 181 cases, some having great chances of being multiplied. Leprosy is certainly not so intensely contagious, but the Icelanders are inconsiderately imprudent. Sick people use the same bed, eating and drinking utensils, as the healthy; marriages are quickly contracted. Dr. Beyer even relates about a pretty, brisk young girl, who kissed the offensive ulcers of a patient, saying, "It does not infect."

But years afterwards the disease will come, showing itself through decreasing activity in the organs of feeling, rheumatic and nervous pains, nodes and ulcers, etc.

The whole organism withers away and decays, until death comes, one might almost say, "piece by piece."

If, also, the patients at the hospital of the Odd Fellow Order are not cured, they are at least prevented from spreading contagion to others, and their life is made more agreeable. After the experience made in the Norwegian hospitals for lepers, it could almost be expected that there should have been dissatisfaction among the inmates on account of the seclusion, and attempts to get away.

But no, to the praise of the Laugarnæs Hospital and its functionaries may be mentioned that such was never the case there. The patients are happy to be there, and their excellent nurse, Miss Jürgensen (formerly directress of the Storehedinge Hospital), says, that in one year there are not so many complaints about the food as in one month at home (in Denmark). The meal regulations are arranged on a ten days' scale and although mutton and chipfish are often served, the fare is good and various.

The most difficult question is how to provide the patients with suitable employment, as many of them are incapacitated for work. But then there are games for them, books, and journals, which have been given to the hospital; in the list of presents, 28 bottles of perfume presented to the female patients by an apothecary at Reykjavik, were found. This may sound funny, but the gift was a very acceptable one, as the dreadful stench is one of the most disagreeable sides of leprosy.

At Christmas the patients had a beautiful tree. Miss Jürgensen

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relates that one of the most ill had but one wish—that of spending another Christmas there. He will hardly attain that.

The favorite of the hospital is Kristine G. She has been blind for twelve years, and her appearance is not very attractive. She looked dreadful when she was laid up. But she is the bright head of the hospital, always happy and clever at tale telling, while the others gather around her attentively listening. She even composes psalms, which are irreproachable in metrical respect. In these psalms she chants the praises of Paradise and of the hospital, which for her appears to be a terrestrial foretaste of heavenly bliss.

Of course the discipline and cleanliness must be strict in a hospital of this kind, but the lepers in Iceland do not shun same as a prison.

On the contrary, the applications for admission are so numerous that it is impossible to receive all. There were, for instance, 7 expectants on the list.

To begin with, the inhabitants of Reykjavik objected strongly to the establishing of a hospital in the vicinity of the town, but this animosity has entirely vanished, and they now visit the patients without fear for contagion.

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From the above an opinion can be formed as to the work and mission of the hospital, but there is still something which must be pointed out. The work now taken up has brought about mutual understanding between Denmark and Iceland. In the bridge building, the establishment of the Laugarnes hospital has been an important factor.

In this work the Icelanders have felt the good intentions of Denmark and same have been appreciated by the whole population.

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In connection with the report upon leprosy in Iceland, it may be proper to mention something about this disease in Denmark. In Copenhagen there are 4 leprosy patients and in the country 2. In Denmark leprosy does not belong to those few diseases which are subjected to public treatment. Iceland has its own leprosy law, which, however, is not compulsory at the Laugarnes hospital. But the conditions in Denmark are not so favorable, or rather unfavorable, for the spreading of this disease as in Iceland. That leprosy is so prevalent on that island, must, to cite Dr. Bjornson, be imputed to the uncleanliness and grotesque carelessness of its population.

VICTOR E. NELSON,  
*United States Consul.*

The SURGEON-GENERAL,  
*U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.*

#### ITALY.

*Report from Naples—Smallpox still present.*

NAPLES, ITALY, September 23, 1901.

SIR: I have the honor to report that for the week ended September 21, 1901, the following ships were inspected:

September 16, the Danish steamship *Cimbria*, bound in ballast for Galveston, Tex.

September 18, the steamship *Lombardia*, of the Italian General Navigation Company, bound with passengers and cargo for New York. There were inspected and passed 759 steerage passengers and 250 pieces